

Minutes

Environmental Advisory Board

20 January 2016

Ogden Dunes Town Hall

The Environmental Board met on 20 January 2016 at 5:30 pm at Town Hall. Attendees were, Jim Biancotti, John Morris, Bob Cattani, Kristine Sandrick, and Susan Adams. Jim Metros of Republic Services was a guest.

The discussion with Mr. Metros was conducted first, with the remainder of the agenda to follow. He started by distributing handouts describing what is recyclable. He then proceeded to say how the market for recycled material fluctuates. Currently, the market is weak, particularly for plastics with the low oil price, such that the company loses money on the recycling. The program continues because diversion from landfill is the right thing to do. Also, the General Assembly has tried to set up incentives to get the diversion rate up to 50% in the State. When Evan Bayh was governor, he sued to stop other states from dumping in our state, but was defeated by the Interstate Commerce Clause. The solid waste districts were then created to create plans to increase diversion. Porter County has one of the better ones in the state, and put a lot of effort into education.

An example of an aggressive program was the city of Toronto, Ontario. The plan was to achieve 80% diversion in 10 years. An economic incentive was used, whereby different size bins for garbage were used, and only what was in the bin was accepted for pickup. If a household had a larger bin, they paid more, so the incentive was to put as much into the recycle bin as possible. Merchants were encouraged to reduce packaging to minimize waste. In Indiana, the solid waste districts were created in 1992 with the intent of creating plans to reach 50% diversion in 20 years. Now, the General Assembly is proposing to reduce funding for underperforming districts, or eliminate them, or allowing governmental units (municipalities, or counties) to remove themselves from districts.

The Ogden Dunes diversion rate is just below 30%. This is one of the better performing towns. The rate would be better if we could get credit for the leaf and brush pickup. This could be added to legislation before the General Assembly if a way could be found to measure it. Grass clippings can be disposed of in the garbage because they generate significant methane in the landfill, and Republic is capturing that methane at its Newton County landfill. Leaves, however, do not decay the same, one they are dead. That is why the leaf composting is desirable.

The next subject was education about what was recyclable, and how it should be placed in the bin. Putting in a plastic bag is not optimal, as it may be tossed into the garbage stream at the transfer station, but bags would be opened at the Diversified sorting facility. The diversion rate is not affected by placing items in plastic bags, however, as the trucks are weighed before being emptied. The weight of the material collected from the yellow bins is divided by the sum of the recycle and trash trucks. Thus, any non-conforming materials removed from the recycle stream at the transfer station do not affect the calculation of the diversion rate. For continuing education about what should be recycled, an attachment to the inside of the lid of the bin with information was proposed — perhaps similar to one of the handouts with more examples. Mr. Metros will provide a cost estimate in the near future.

There was no time for the rest of the agenda, as the room was reserved for the next meeting.

Jim moved to accept the minutes of the last meeting of the Environmental Board, for 18 November 2015. The motion carried.

Jim moved to adjourn, and Susan seconded. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by John Morris.